

Oct. 18, 2026

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of Ephesians

Alive In Christ: Discovering Our Identity & Purpose

Part 4: God's Good News Story of Reconciliation

Ephesians 2:11–3:21

Today we continue our historical and chronological journey through the New Testament with Part 2 of The letter to the Ephesians. This Letter was written by the Apostle Paul during his first Roman imprisonment, around AD 60–62. Paul composed four letters now known as the Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians.

- Movement I: **What We Were** —
Separated, Excluded, and Hopeless (2:11–12)
- Movement II: **What Christ Did** —
Breaking Down Every Wall (2:13–18)
- Movement III: **What We Are Now** —
Citizens, Family, and Living Stones (2:19–22)
- Movement IV: **What We Are Entrusted With** —
Stewards of the Sacred Mystery (3:1–13)
- Movement V: **What We Have Power To Do** —
Understand, Experience, and Be Complete in Love (3:14–19)
- Movement VI: **What God Is Able To Do** —
Beyond Everything We Ask or Imagine (3:20–21)

KEY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Ephesians 2:19, 21–22 (NLT)

"So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself. We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord."

Ephesians 3:14, 20–21 (NLT)

"When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father... Now all glory to God, Who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen."

On the day Jesus died, something happened in the temple in Jerusalem that changed everything.

The great veil — sixty feet high, four inches thick, the massive curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple — was torn in two. From top to bottom. Not from the bottom up, as a man would tear it. From the top down, as only God could.

For centuries, that veil had declared one message:
You cannot come in. God is holy. You are not.

Only one man — the High Priest — could pass through it, and only once a year, and only with the blood of a sacrifice. The veil was not just a curtain. It was a declaration of separation between a holy God and sinful humanity.

But when Jesus cried "*It is finished*" and breathed His last, God reached down from heaven and tore that curtain in two — and the door swung open. That is the mystery Paul is about to unfold.

Now, if you have been tracking with us through this series, you have noticed that Paul is a very deliberate writer. In the first three chapters of Ephesians, he has been building a magnificent theological foundation — declaring who we are *in Christ*. Our **position**.

What God has done *for* us in His sovereignty. What Christ has done *in* us by His grace. And now, in chapters 2:11 through 3:21, Paul turns to what Christ has done *between* us — the miracle of reconciliation. Dr. Warren Wiersbe observed that Ephesians moves in two great movements: **POSITION AND PRACTICE**. Chapters 1 through 3 declare what God has done — our standing before Him in Christ. Chapters 4 through 6 call us to walk it out — our conduct before the world. You cannot have the practice without the position. You cannot walk worthy of a calling you do not yet understand. And right here — at the hinge point of that great movement — Paul unveils the mystery.

Not just that individuals can now approach God through Christ — though that is gloriously true. But that **God was throwing the door open to the whole world**. Jews and Gentiles. Insiders and outsiders. Every tribe, every tongue, every nation — all invited through the same torn veil, all washed in the same blood, all welcomed into the same family.

Last week in Ephesians 2:1–10, we saw what God did for us *individually* — raising us from the graveyard of sin by His grace and making us His masterpiece. That was our **POSITION** before God — declared righteous, seated in the heavenly realms, created for His purpose.

But today IN 2:11-3:21, Paul widens the lens. He shows us that our position in Christ is not just *vertical* — it is also *horizontal*. It is not just **personal** — it is **communal**.

You and I were once complete outsiders. But through the blood of Jesus, we are **no longer strangers**. We are citizens of heaven, members of God's family, and living stones being built together into a holy temple for the living God.

Let us walk through this passage in five clear movements.

I. WHAT WE WERE:

SEPARATED, EXCLUDED, HOPELESS

(Ephesians 2:11–12)

Look at verses 11 and 12:

"Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders... In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope."

Paul begins with a direct pastoral command:

"Remember." Never forget where grace found you.

Dr. Wiersbe points out that the single word that summarizes our former condition before the cross is the tragic word **WITHOUT**.

Look at the fivefold indictment of our spiritual heritage:

1. **Without Christ:** We had no Savior, chasing dead idols in spiritual darkness.
2. **Without Citizenship:** We were aliens, shut out from the commonwealth of Israel.
3. **Without Covenants:** We possessed no legal claim on God's promises to Abraham, Moses, or David.
4. **Without Hope:** A cloud of despair hung over the pagan world; ancient graves bore inscriptions declaring death to be the final, meaningless end.

5. Without God (*atheoi* in the Greek):

Surrounded by thousands of counterfeit gods, yet completely separated from the one true living God.

In that era, Jewish religious leaders prayed daily, *"O God, I thank You that I am not a Gentile."* The Gentile was viewed as an unclean outcast, separated by an immense chasm of mutual hostility.

Narrative:

Picture a great banqueting hall—warm light pouring through the windows, music, fellowship, and celebration filling the room.

Outside in the dark stands a stranger. No invitation in hand. No family name recognized at the door. No place set at the table. Just the cold night and the ache of knowing a feast is taking place that you cannot enter.

That was us before the cross. Outside the covenants. Outside the promises. Crying out to idols of stone and silver that could not hear, could not answer, and could not save. We were hopeless, homeless, and without God in the world.

Practical Takeaway: *Humility and Gratitude.* You cannot truly appreciate the grace that saved you until you remember the spiritual bankruptcy from which you were rescued.

II. WHAT CHRIST DID:

BREAKING DOWN EVERY WALL

(Ephesians 2:13–18)

If verse 12 is the dark reality of our past, look at the two glorious words that begin verse 13:

"BUT NOW in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For Christ himself is our peace, who has made both groups one and has torn down the dividing wall of hostility!"

Just as *"But God"* in verse 4 shattered our spiritual death, **"BUT NOW"** in verse 13 shatters our spiritual distance!

How did Jesus accomplish this?

In Herod's temple in Jerusalem, a literal stone wall separated the outer Court of the Gentiles from the sacred inner courts. Archaeologists have discovered the actual stone warning tablets from that wall. In Greek and Latin it warned:

"No foreigner may enter within the barricade surrounding the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his ensuing death!"

It was a physical barrier of exclusion, hostility, and condemnation.

When Jesus died on Calvary, three monumental breakthroughs occurred:

1. **The Temple Veil was torn in two from top to bottom** (Matt. 27:51)—granting direct access into God's presence.
2. **The Dividing Wall was demolished**—abolishing the ceremonial barrier that separated Jew and Gentile.
3. **The Enmity was Canceled at the Cross.**

Dr. Wiersbe recounts a man who entered his study seeking marriage guidance and said, *"Pastor, my wife and I need a re-cancellation!"* He meant *reconciliation*—but his slip of the tongue carried profound truth. Offenses had to be canceled before reconciliation could take place.

On the cross, Jesus did not merely negotiate a truce. **He paid the debt.** He canceled the enmity in His own body and created **one new humanity** out of the divided factions.

Practical Takeaway: *The Ministry of Reconciliation.*

If the cross tore down the ancient dividing wall of hostility, the church has no right to rebuild walls of prejudice, pride, or division today.

III. WHAT WE ARE NOW:

CITIZENS, FAMILY, AND LIVING STONES

(Ephesians 2:19–22)

Look at the glorious transformation in verses

19 through 22: *"So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself."*

Paul uses three distinct pictures to describe our corporate identity:

1. One Nation: Heavenly Citizens (v. 19a)

We are no longer undocumented aliens wandering without protection. In the book of Acts, we see the three great families of the earth united under Christ: the Ethiopian official in Acts 8 (descendant of Ham), Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9 (descendant of Shem), and the Roman centurion Cornelius in Acts 10 (descendant of Japheth). Christ took the fractured families of earth and granted them citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

2. One Family: Sons and Daughters (v. 19b)

Citizens share a government, but family shares **life**. Through the new birth, God is our Father. We sit at the same table, covered by the same blood, loved with the same eternal love.

3. One Temple: Living Stones Built on the Chief Cornerstone (vv. 20–22)

In the Old Testament, God dwelt in the tabernacle and later in Solomon's temple. When Israel persisted in sin, the glory departed. Then God dwelt bodily in Jesus Christ (John 1:14).

And where does God dwell on earth today? **In His Church!**

Not in brick-and-mortar buildings, but in a living temple constructed of redeemed souls.

In ancient architecture, the cornerstone was not decorative; it was foundational. Every other stone was measured, aligned, and plumbed against it. If the cornerstone was true, the entire building stood firm. Jesus Christ is our Chief Cornerstone. You were not polished before God picked you up—you were rough, broken, pulled from the quarry of sin. But the Master Architect shaped you with grace and set you into a living structure that will outlast every earthly empire. You belong here.

Practical Takeaway: *Belonging and Interdependence.* You cannot be a solitary "living stone." A stone lying by itself in the field is useless; its strength is realized only when joined and cemented together with the rest of the body.

IV. WHAT WE ARE ENTRUSTED WITH: **STEWARDS OF THE SACRED MYSTERY**

(Ephesians 3:1–13)

Subpoint: *Keepers of the Secret — God's Plan to Unite All Things in Christ*

In chapter 3:1, Paul pauses mid-sentence to explain his divine assignment:

"When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles... God Himself revealed His mysterious plan to me... Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children."
(3:1, 3, 6)

Paul does not call himself a prisoner of Rome, though a Roman soldier is chained to his wrist. He is a **prisoner of Christ Jesus**. His chains are not a tragedy; they are a testimony.

God entrusted Paul—and has now entrusted this church—with three vital responsibilities:

A. Know God's Will — The Mystery Revealed (vv. 1–6)

God's will was never to save an exclusive group and leave the rest of the world in darkness. His eternal purpose is to gather one family from every tribe, tongue, and nation through the gospel. To know God's will is to align your heart with His global redemptive mission.

B. Understand the Message of Grace — The Mystery Proclaimed (vv. 7–9)

Paul calls himself *"the least deserving of all God's people."* Having persecuted the early church, he knew the magnitude of grace. He was commissioned to preach what he calls the **"unsearchable riches of Christ"** (v. 8). The Greek word means *untraceable*—like footsteps in the ocean. The riches of grace are inexhaustible; you can spend a lifetime exploring them and never reach the bottom.

C. Display the Good News to All — The Mystery Displayed (vv. 10–13)

Look at verse 10:

"God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."

The church is God's theater. Unseen angelic beings and cosmic authorities are watching the church. When believers of different backgrounds, generations, and ethnicities worship and serve together in supernatural unity, **the manifold wisdom of God is put on display to the entire cosmos.**

Practical Takeaway: *Unity as Cosmic Testimony.* Church harmony is not a personal preference—it is a public demonstration to the spiritual realm that the cross has conquered sin and hostility.

V. WHAT WE HAVE ACCESS TO

Christ's Glorious, Unlimited Resource of Love

(Ephesians 3:14–19)

Paul has just finished unveiling the greatest mystery in human history — that God, through the cross of Jesus Christ, has torn down every wall, united every nation, and built one holy family from the wreckage of a divided world.

And when he stops to think about the full weight of what he has just written — he cannot remain standing.

He falls to his knees.

"When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father..." (v. 14)

This is not a polite pastoral prayer tacked onto the end of a theological lecture. This is a man undone by the magnitude of grace — and deeply burdened that the believers in Ephesus would not merely *know* these truths in their heads, but actually *access* them in their daily lives.

Because here is the danger Paul sees: **you can be extraordinarily wealthy and still live like you are poor.**

Remember the story of William Randolph Hearst — from last week. That is the condition of too many believers. The resources are already yours. The

account is already full. The question is whether you are making any withdrawals.

Paul's prayer is essentially this: **"Church — open the account. Access what Christ has already deposited for you."** And what exactly do we have access to? [Four inexhaustible resources:](#)

1. Access to Unlimited Strength (v. 16)

"Out of His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit."

Notice the phrase — *"glorious, unlimited resources."* Paul is not praying that God would give us a little extra energy to get through the week. He is pointing us to a reservoir with no bottom and no shore.

Takeaway: *You do not need more willpower. You need more of the Spirit. Stop straining in your own strength and start drawing on His.*

2. Access to Unlimited Depth (v. 17)

Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

The Greek word for Christ *"making His home"* in your heart is *katoikeo* — meaning to settle in permanently, to be fully at home, to take up complete residence. Paul is not describing a weekend visit.

He is describing Christ moving in — fully, completely, into every room of your life. The result? You become **rooted** like a great cedar — drawing life from deep below the surface — and **grounded** like a building set on footings that no storm can shake.

Takeaway: *Spiritual stability is not the absence of storms. It is the depth of your roots. Let Christ settle into every area of your life — not just the presentable rooms.*

3. Access to Unlimited Love (vv. 18–19a)

¹⁸ *And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is.* ¹⁹ *May you experience the love of Christ,*

Wiersbe points out that Paul uses the word *apprehend* here — not merely *comprehend*. To comprehend is to mentally grasp something. To apprehend is to **lay hold of it for yourself**. Paul wants us to seize the love of God — to step into it, walk through it, and claim it as our own inheritance.

God's love has four dimensions:

- **Wide** — broad enough to reach every human being who has ever lived
- **Long** — stretching from before creation to beyond eternity
- **Deep** — reaching into the lowest pit of sin and shame to find and rescue the most broken soul

- **High** — lifting the redeemed sinner from the ash heap and seating him in the heavenly realms
- And then Paul adds the breathtaking paradox: *"though it is too great to understand fully."* You will never exhaust it. You will never find the edge of it. It is, as Wiersbe says, **untraceable** — like trying to follow footsteps across the surface of the ocean.

Takeaway: *Stop living as though God's love for you has limits, conditions, or an expiration date. His love is not a resource that depletes — it is an ocean with no shore.*

4. Access to Unlimited Fullness (v. 19b)

"Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God."

This is a key point of Paul's prayer. Not just strength, not just depth, not just love — but **the fullness of God Himself** poured into the life of the believer. Not partially. Not occasionally. But completely, continuously, to overflowing. Positionally, we are already complete in Christ (Col. 2:9–10). But practically, we only enjoy the grace we actually reach out and take hold of by faith **The resources are there. The account is full. The question is whether we are living out of it.**

Takeaway: *The goal of the Christian life is not merely to be forgiven — it is to be filled. Forgiveness gets us through the door; fullness is the life God intends for us to live inside it.*

VI. What God Is Able To Do:

Beyond Everything We Ask or Imagine

(Ephesians 3:20–21)

"Now all glory to God, Who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen."

This is not a closing formality. This is a **theological declaration** — the capstone of everything Paul has built across three chapters.

Wiersbe outlines the ascending staircase of Paul's language:

1. He is able to do **all**
2. above **all** —
3. abundantly above **all** —
4. **exceedingly abundantly** above all that we ask or think.

Four steps. Each one higher than the last. Each one stretching language to its absolute limit — and then beyond.

The Greek phrase *hyper ekperissou* — translated "*exceedingly abundantly*" — appears nowhere else in the New Testament. Paul essentially invented a word because no existing word was large enough to contain what he was trying to say. And notice where this power operates: "*according to the power at work within us.*"

Not power that is distant. Not power that is theoretical. Power that is already resident in the believer — the same resurrection power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, now actively at work in ordinary men and women who have trusted Him by faith. **And the result? Glory to God in the church.** — in this community of broken, redeemed, reconciled, Spirit-filled people who were once strangers and are now family.

Closing: Look at the journey of Ephesians 2 and 3.

- We began as outsiders — without Christ, without citizenship, without hope, and without God.
- We were brought near by the blood of the cross.
- We were built into a holy nation, a family, and a living temple.
- We were entrusted with the sacred mystery of grace.
- We were given power to be strengthened, rooted, and filled with the very fullness of God.
- And now Paul points us to a God who is able to do more — far more — infinitely more — than anything we have yet asked, imagined, or dared to believe.
- Stop living small. Stop praying small. Stop believing small.
- The God who tore the veil, broke down the wall, and raised His Son from the dead is the same God who is at work in you — right now — today.

And He is able.

Invitation & Response:

To Every Believer Today:

Are you trying to live your faith as an isolated stone, or are you locked into the living temple of God's church? Stop living in spiritual weakness. Reconnect with the power of the Spirit in your inner man. Root your life in the inexhaustible love of Christ and commit yourself to walking in unity with your brothers and sisters.

To Anyone Standing on the Outside:

You do not have to remain outside the banquet hall for another moment. Jesus Christ paid your admission price in His own blood. The dividing wall is broken down. The door of grace is open wide.

Step across the threshold of faith today, receive the forgiveness of sins, and enter the family of the living God.

Pray this prayer with me>>>>

"Father, open the eyes of our hearts today. Forgive us for living like isolated strangers when You have made us living stones in Your house. Empower our inner being through Your Spirit, let Christ dwell richly in our hearts by faith, and let this church put Your manifold wisdom on display to a watching world. In the mighty and matchless name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

Ephesians 2 New Living Translation

¹Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ²You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. ⁴But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. ⁸God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. ¹¹Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. ¹²In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.

¹⁵ He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶ Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

¹⁷ He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. ¹⁸ Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

¹⁹ So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. ²⁰ Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. ²¹ We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. ²² Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 3 New Living Translation

¹ When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles . . . ² assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. ³ As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. ⁴ As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. ⁵ God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

⁶ And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.

⁷ By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

⁸ Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. ⁹ I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

¹⁰ God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹² Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. ¹³ So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored. ¹⁴ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹ Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.